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VATER, SOHN UND FÜRSPRECHER IN DER BABYLONISCHEN GOTTESVORSTELLUNG. Ein Problem für die vergleichende Religionswissenschaft. Von HEINRICH ZIMMERN. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1896. Pp. 15, 8vo. M. 2.

In a small pamphlet of fifteen pages, Professor Zimmern discusses the interesting question of "mediatorship" as illustrated by the religious literature of the Babylonians. It is by no means the first time that attention has been directed to the subject. The writer of this review in a monograph on the *Dibbarra* Epic published in 1891¹ referred to the association of two deities in the relationship of father and son, the latter acting as mediator between the former and the subjects of both — mankind. The text which forms the starting point of Zimmern's investigation is the same as the one I took as the basis of my remarks. The two gods brought into association are Marduk and Ea; and it is in the incantation texts more specifically that Marduk appears in the rôle of mediator between Ea, the god of humanity *par excellence*, and suffering mankind. The petitioner, whether tortured by disease or otherwise subjected to discomfort by the hold which some evil spirit (or spirits) or a cruel witch has obtained over him, appeals to Marduk for relief. Marduk, yielding in authority to his father Ea, proceeds to the dwelling place of Ea which is "the deep" and asks for instructions. Ea deprecates the possession of superior knowledge. He says to his son :

"What can I tell thee that thou dost not already know?"

Despite this assumed modesty, however, the father directs his son what remedies to apply in order to secure the relief of the sufferer, in whose behalf Marduk acts as mediator.

So far everything is clear, but when it comes to interpret the meaning and reason for this position of mediator which Marduk assumes, we are unable to agree with Dr. Zimmern. According to him, Ea as the father-god is "unapproachable." The conceptions bound up with him are such as to remove the thought of a direct appeal to him.

It seems to me, however, that Dr. Zimmern omits to take into consideration an important factor in accounting for the present form of the incantation texts. There can be no doubt that the religious literature of Babylonia, especially those portions of it like the incantation rituals which served a practical purpose, underwent recastings at

¹ *A Fragment of the Babylonian Dibbarra Epic* (Philadelphia, 1891), p. 38.

various periods. These recastings were in large measure superinduced by changes in the political conditions occurring in the Euphrates valley. The most striking of these changes and the most effective in its results was the supreme position secured for the city of Babylon through the conquests of Hammurabi (c. 2300 B. C.). With this supremacy of the city, the patron deity of Babylon, who is none other than Marduk, is naturally elevated to be the head of the Babylonian pantheon. This momentous event superinduced many changes in the traditions, the legends, and in the religious beliefs that long before Hammurabi had already been combined into some definite system, or perhaps it would be more correct to say into systems, produced in the various ancient centers of Babylonian life and thought. Marduk—a comparatively recent deity—had to be brought *en rapport* with the traditions of the past. A place had to be found for him that would accord with the dignity he assumed in the united empire formed of the ancient states of Babylonia. The theologians of Babylon did not hesitate to set aside an older god to promote the glory of their favorite Marduk. Among the ancient centers of Babylonia, Nippur and Eridu occupy a prominent position. The chief god of Nippur was En-lil who became known as Bêl, “the lord;” the chief god of Eridu was Ea, the creator, protector, and teacher of mankind. Both had to yield some modicum of their authority to Marduk. According to one version of the creation of mankind, it was Bel of Nippur who succeeded in overcoming primeval chaos—symbolized by a monster Tiamat—in order to prepare the way for the creation of mankind. This story was recast by the Babylonian schools of theology so as to give to Marduk the honor originally belonging to Bel of Nippur. The older god voluntarily resigns in favor of the younger one. In the present form of the Tiamat story, Bel transfers his titles including the name Bel or “lord” to Marduk. The transference of the name meant the transfer of all power and prerogatives. Ea, the god of Eridu, makes a similar transfer. Other gods follow the example of Bel and Ea, and thus armed with the combined strength of the pantheon, Marduk proceeds to the conflict and is of course triumphant.

In the same way, we must interpret the association of Marduk and Ea in the incantation texts. The prominence of Ea in incantation rites is a survival in religion of the important position once occupied politically by the city of Eridu—situated on the Persian gulf. The patron god of the largest and therefore most sacred sheet of water known to the inhabitants of the Euphrates valley becomes, by virtue

of the dimmed tradition according to which the culture of the land takes its rise in the extreme south, the one who watches over the welfare of mankind in general. Other factors that need not be enumerated here enter into play to make the incantation ritual perfected in Eridu or under the influence of the Ea cult, a standard adopted by the priests of Babylon. But the old ritual was reshaped. Ea is not set aside altogether, Marduk is "shoved in," as it were, and accorded the distinction of being the protector of humanity which is of right due to Ea. It is Marduk and no longer Ea who hears the cry of the one held in the clutch of the evil spirit. Marduk on the other hand pays a tribute of respect to Ea but the latter is at pains to acknowledge that Marduk's wisdom and power is equal to his own. The point of the dialogue between Marduk and Ea is to emphasize the *equality* of the two. The assumed relationship of father and son between Marduk and Ea which is not limited to the incantation texts represents the natural compromise brought about by the theologians of the united Babylonian Empire whose task lay in reconciling the religious legacy of the past with the existing conditions. Ea being older in authority is the father who—it is important to note—*willingly* acknowledges the supremacy of Marduk. The latter by virtue of being younger to attain to prominence, is regarded as the son.

There is nothing about Ea which makes him more "unapproachable" than Marduk or any other god, as Dr. Zimmern would have us believe. He is not approached directly in some of the incantation texts, simply because these old texts have been reshaped in order to give a proper place to the great god of Babylon.

Not all the incantation texts have been so reshaped. There are some in which Ea is *directly* appealed to and where Marduk is not mentioned at all. A further proof that Ea is the older "god of incantations" and was once regarded within a wide district as the superior in this respect to all others is the text—well known to scholars—in which a group of spirits constantly molesting mankind are described as "hostile to Ea." They are "hostile" to the god because it is he who is able to check their course. It is he to whom as the protector of mankind the appeal is made. For further illustrations of this historical view as to the relation existing between Marduk and Ea, I may be permitted to refer to chapters viii and xv of my forthcoming volume on *The Religion of the Babylonians and Assyrians* in which the subject is fully treated.

We are therefore not justified in concluding from the Marduk-Ea episode, as Dr. Zimmern would have us do, that the Babylonian doctrine of mediatorship has any direct connection with the Christian teaching. But Dr. Zimmern goes further than this. He suggests that the fire-god Gibil or Nusku, appearing in the incantation texts as the one who "intercedes" with Ea through Marduk on behalf of those suffering from bewitchment may have been the "germ" that developed into the doctrine of the "Holy Ghost." While careful to emphasize the tentativeness of his theory, Dr. Zimmern propounds the very interesting thesis—and if correct, very important one—that Marduk, Ea, and Gibil-Nusku form a triad that reappear in more developed form in the Christian Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Apart from the objections already urged against Zimmern's interpretation of the relationship between Marduk and Ea, in his view of the rôle played by the fire-god in the incantation texts he omits an important link—the relationship of Gibil to the god Bel of the old Babylonian triad Anu, Bel and Ea.

In my monograph on the Dibbarra Epic already referred to (pp. 26-27) I called attention to a section in the "Šurpu" series² of incantations in which Bel and Nusku appear in combination with Marduk and Ea. The fire-god is the messenger of Bel. He bears, therefore, a similar relation to Bel as Marduk does to Ea. Marduk is Ea's messenger, sent as occasion arises to do his service. Bel and Nusku seem to belong to the heavenly hosts, while Marduk and Ea are more concerned with earthly affairs, but this distinction is not consistently maintained in the religious literature. Now, in the text in question, the two groups are combined in an interesting manner. Bel sends his messenger Gibil-Nusku with a message to "the deep"—*i. e.*, to Ea. The latter hears the appeal made to him, but instead of replying directly sends his son Marduk as the messenger to convey his answer. According to the view above proposed, we must see in this combination of the four gods a further trace of the reëditing which the old incantation ritual underwent at the hands of Babylonian theologians. Fire, as Zimmern properly points out, was an important element in Babylonian magic, and, for that matter, in all magic. The combination of the fire-god with Bel points to some ritual—perhaps one devised by the priests of Nippur—in which these two deities played the chief part. It would be natural for the priests of Nippur to make Gibil-Nusku the messenger of the mighty Bel.

See now ZIMMERN, *Die Beschwörungstafeln Šurpu*, Tafel V und VI.

Next to fire, or rather by the side of fire, water constitutes an important element in magic. Water purifies, as fire removes impurities. Both are regarded as sacred by all ancient nations, both lend themselves to mystic speculations. In the "Ea" incantation rituals, water must have played an important part. Frequently does Ea direct his son to carry "waters of purification" to those stricken with disease by the evil spirits. Hence what could be more natural than, in the eclectic process to which all religious rituals are prone, to combine "water" and "fire" incantations into a single group. Marduk having been introduced into the "Ea" incantations, it was only another step to add to the Marduk-Ea group, Bel and Nusku.

The text (IV Rawlinson, plate 15) which Dr. Zimmern adduces in proof of his view of Gibil-Nusku as the "interceder," represents but another variation of the combination of the Marduk-Ea incantations with "fire" incantations. The omission of Bel in the text translated by Zimmern and in others adduced by him, only shows that Gibil-Nusku could be introduced independently of Bel, and was originally independent of Bel, just as Ea is at times dissociated from Marduk and was originally entirely independent of Marduk. More than this, the fire-god is just as often addressed directly and independent of Marduk and Ea, both in the "Maqlū" and in the "Shurpu" series. That Gibil-Nusku is made in a measure subservient to Marduk and Ea, acting as interceder or as one who could only be addressed with the sanction of Marduk and Ea ("Maqlū" series, Tablet V, l. 124, quoted by Zimmern) is again due to the priests of Babylon in their desire to deduce all authority from their favorite Marduk.

With such a large number of variations in the incantation rituals, Ea, Marduk-Ea, Marduk-Ea and Gibil-Nusku, Bel and Gibil-Nusku, Marduk-Ea classing with Bel-Gibil-Nusku, the conclusions drawn by Dr. Zimmern are certainly not warranted. He, as noticed by Amiaud, himself points out (p. 9) that the notion of "intercession" is not limited to its association with Gibil-Nusku. Already in Gudea's days the great gods appear, accompanied by smaller ones, who act as "interceders" on behalf of mankind. In some cases this relationship of greater to smaller gods is expressed by making the smaller ones sons of the greater, in others by classing the minor gods as servants or messengers. So for later days besides the groups Marduk-Ea and Bel-Nusku, we have Nergal and Išum, Marduk and Nebo, and more the like.

The reason for the existence of these relationships is by no means

the same in all cases. In some instances, the lesser god represents the patron deity of a district conquered by a more powerful state; in others mythological factors enter into play, while again there is a third class of instances in which the combination reflects the views of certain schools of theological thought.

It is not necessary, however, to turn to the Babylonian pantheon to find traces of the doctrine of "mediatorship" and "intercession." The position of the priest in the Babylonian religion is primarily that of mediator. It is he who brings the petitions of the individuals before the gods. In later days, even the kings cannot approach the gods directly. The priest is the only one who can "inquire" of the deity what is to be done in regard to the case under consideration, what the outcome of a disease or of a military undertaking will be. The power acquired by the Babylonian priesthood is due chiefly, if not solely, to this function of mediatorship which was constantly exercised by them.

In accounting, then, for the existence of "mediatorship" in the relationship among the gods, our starting point must be the views current among the Babylonians as to the relationship *between* the gods and mankind. It is this relationship which comes to be applied to the gods, when in the course of time attempts were made to combine the large number of gods—whatever their origin—into some system. Father and son, master and servant, as applied to the gods reflect social institutions; and similarly "mediatorship" is a doctrine which is introduced into the Babylonian theology and applied to the gods by virtue of the manner in which people viewed their own relations to the powers upon which they felt themselves dependent. Briefly put, mediatorship exists on earth and among men before it is projected heavenwards.

So far as Marduk, Ea, and Gibil-Nusku are concerned, I trust to have shown that there is nothing peculiar in the position which they occupy in the Babylonian pantheon, and nothing exceptional in the view taken of their relationship to one another. There are other gods viewed as father and son, and the addition of the fire-god to Marduk and Ea is not of a nature such as to constitute a trinity or triad to which any special religious significance is to be attached. The combination of Marduk and Ea is due to political conditions rather than to religious speculation, while the addition of Gibil-Nusku is a natural consequence of the importance attached to fire as a means of release from the clutch of the evil spirits or of the sorcerers.

The introduction of the idea of "intercession" in the relationship between the three gods, besides not being exceptional (as Zimmern himself recognizes), is due to the prominence given to the function of the earthly priest as "interceder." In the combination Marduk, Ea, and Gibil-Nusku there is not a "trinity" corresponding in any way to "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," but only a *duality*—a superior god and one who, in the capacity of son or messenger, occupies or once occupied a lower rank. Gibil-Nusku, when added to Marduk and Ea, does not introduce a new idea or a third factor, but only a modification of an idea already existing. Gibil-Nusku, like Marduk, is a "mediator," and the mediation in his case, as in the case of Marduk, is due to the recasting and combination of old rituals to make them conform to the dignity accorded to the head of the Babylonian pantheon.

The combination of gods into a triad or trinity is of course well known in the Babylonian religion. For the older period, we have Anu, Bel, and Ea; for a later period, Sin, Šamas, and Ramman. A reference to the former triad may perhaps be seen in the protest of the decalogue (Ex. 20:4), but there are triads of gods among other nations—notably Egypt and India—and there certainly does not appear to be any warrant for regarding Marduk, Ea, and Gibil-Nusku as a triad in this sense. The importance of the issue raised by Professor Zimmern justifies this rather extended notice of his little pamphlet. While scholars will be grateful to the learned Leipzig professor for his suggestive essay, it remains to be seen whether many will be found who will agree with the rather startling deductions made by him from the existing and rather scanty material.

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A CYCLE OF CATHAY. By W. A. P. MARTIN, D.D., LL.D. Chicago: F. H. Revell Co. 1896. Pp. 464. \$2.

A "cycle of Cathay" contains sixty years, and the cycle last finished Dr. Martin outlines for us on the basis of a forty years' activity in China. Moreover the activity was nearly unique, being comparable only with that of Sir Robert Hart, of Chinese customs fame, for Dr. Martin was entrusted by the Chinese government for thirty years with the presidency of the Tungwen College, established for the education of its diplomatic corps. In this function Dr. Martin came into frequent and intimate contact with the *Tsungli Yamen*, China's Foreign Office,